

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 29, 2003. Claims 1-5, 7, 11-20, 22-24, 27-29, 31-33, 35-37, 39-48, 53-56, 61-66, and 72-73 are pending in this application. Claims 6, 8-10, 21, 25-26, 30, 34, 38, 49-52, 57-60, 67-71, and 74-76 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 22, 24, 31, 39, 41, 54-55, 61, 64, 72, and 73 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicants note that the Office Action indicated that Claims 2-20, 22-24, 26-29, 31-54, 56, 58, 61-61, 65-66, and 72 would be allowable if rewritten so as not to depend from a rejected claim.

Claims 1, 55, 64, and 73 were rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,088,487 (*Karashige*). The Office Action rejected Claims 21, 25, 30, 57, 59-60, 67-71, 74 and 76 as unpatentable over *Karashige* and further in view of well known prior art. Claim 75 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention. Cancellation of Claim 75 renders this rejection moot. Applicants respectfully traverse the remaining rejections in view of the foregoing amendments to the claims.

The present invention as set forth in amended Claim 1 includes modifying a first image to obtain a second image on the basis of a first signal and a second signal, wherein said first signal is obtained by extracting an edge of the first image, said edge having a thickness according to an attribute of the entire first image, and wherein said second signal is obtained by reducing a number of tone levels. Claim 1 as amended now contains the previously allowed subject matter of Claim 26, wherein the first

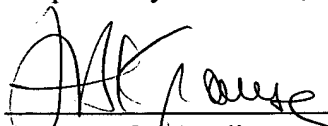
signal is a signal obtained by extracting an edge having a thickness according to an attribute of the entire first image. In view of the fact that Claim 1 now contains the allowable subject matter of previously objected to Claim 26, Applicants believe that it, and all the claims that depend therefrom, are patentably distinct over the cited prior art.

Independent claims 55, 64, and 73, have been rewritten so as to contain the allowable subject matter of Claim 26, and previously objected to dependent claims 22, 24, 31, 39, 41, 54, 61, and 72, have been rewritten in independent form so as to no longer depend from rejected claims. As a result of the amendments, Applicants believe that all of the amended claims, and the claims that depend therefrom are presented in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 24613

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

NY_MAIN 392212v1